

REMARKS

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §102

A number of the claims were rejected on the basis of three prior art documents, namely, Polley, Conley et al. and Lebourg.

It is noted that none of the cited prior art documents relate to “drifting” a tubing string, that is the process of ensuring that the sections of tubing which make up a tubing string define an unobstructed throughbore of at least a selected diameter, typically to ensure that a device of a diameter matching said selected diameter may subsequently be safely and reliably passed through the tubing sections, often after the original tubing string has been retrieved and the tubing sections then reconnected to form a further tubing string.

Independent claims 70, 83 and 84 have been amended to more clearly identify the purpose and intended use of the present invention. For example, claim 70 has been amended and is now directed to a method of determining whether a string of tubing located in a drilled bore and comprising a plurality of tubing sections defines an unobstructed throughbore of at least a selected diameter. The claim now recites that the drift member which is provided in accordance with the method of the invention has a diameter selected to match said selected diameter, and further that the engagement of the drift member with the profile provided in the tubing string is indicative that the tubing above the profile defines an unobstructed throughbore of at least said selected diameter. There is no disclosure nor suggestion of such features in the cited art.

Corresponding amendments have been entered in claims 83 and 84.

In light of the above, it is believed that the amended claims are clearly patentably distinguished from the cited art.

Allowable Subject Matter

It was noted that claims 72, 76, 90, 101 and 102 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 101 has been amended in this manner.

Further Amendments

Claim 102 has been amended to more clearly describe the features of a particular drift member made in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. In particular, such an embodiment is described in paragraph 29 of the published application.

New claims 103 through 109 introduce additional features of the invention which relate to particular features of drifting methods and apparatus.

Dated:

10-30-07

Respectfully submitted,

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